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SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: INDIAN MINISTERS, SANS
PORTFOLIOS, SWORN IN

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Classified By: D/Political Counselor Les Viguerie Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

11. (SBU) Indian President Pratibha Patil administered the oath of office to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and 19 Cabinet Ministers at 6:30pm (local time) on May 22. Portfolios will be announced in the coming days. Among the returning ministers were prominent Congress Party names from the previous government -- Pranab Mukherhjee, A.K. Antony, P. Chidambaram, Kamal Nath -- although they will not necessarily keep their old portfolios. A new face, former Karnataka Chief Minister and Congress veteran S.M. Krishna (77) was among those sworn in today and is the front runner for the Foreign Minister position. The Congress is expected to keep the power portfolios -- Foreign Affairs, Home, Finance, Defense -- to itself. Two UPA allies figured in today's list: Sharad Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party and Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress. A second tranche of Cabinet Minister and Ministers of State are expected to be sworn in on May 26. The total size of the Ministry when it is completed is expected to be about 70. As is always the case with Indian governments, the composition will be carefully balanced between regions, religions, ethnic/caste groups and gender considerations.

Who's Out

12. (C) Minister of Human Resource Development Arjun Singh did not figure in the list and appears to have lost his job because of his erratic behavior during the election campaign after his son and daughter were denied Congress parliamentary nominations. His departure is good news for India and the U.S.-India relationship. From the Jurassic wing of the Congress party, Arjun Singh had ideas firmly rooted in the distant past and has been a consistent and obdurate opponent of our agenda in India. Other Congress ministers who failed to make the cut today and are expected to be jettisoned from the cabinet include Law Minister H.L. Bhardwaj and Mines Minister Sis Ram Ola. Also not finding their way back are

Congress Party ministers who lost their Lok Sabha contests, including Women and Child Development Minister Renuka Chaudhary and Panchyati Raj Minister Mani Shanker Aiyar.

Where is the youth?

¶3. (C) There was much chatter in the past few days about inducting more ministers from a sizable pool of younger members of Parliament, many of whom were hand-picked by Rahul Gandhi and owe their allegiance to him. It did not happen today but we could see younger faces in the next phase of ministerial appointments. The core Cabinet appointments today are dominated by elderly males who are distinguished above all by their loyalty to the Nehru-Gandhi family but are also seen as competent policymakers/administrators. The final word on their selection was that of the Prime Minister and Sonia Gandhi. There are some newer faces, even if they are old-timers in Indian politics. These include C.P. Joshi and Meira Kumar.

Bargaining Continues

¶4. (C) The negotiations and the brinkmanship between the Congress and its allies will continue in the days ahead. Congress allies from Tamil Nadu proved to be the most difficult to satisfy. DMK supremo Karunanidhi demanded too much and then threw a tantrum after the Prime Minister turned him down. Karunanidhi returned to Chennai hours before the swearing-in, threatening to sit-out this administration and, instead, to only support it from the outside. Prime Minister Singh is understood to have put his foot down on reinducting

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the DMK's A. Raja and T.R Ballu for their demonstrated nonperformance and blatant, unapologetic corruption as Cabinet Ministers in the previous government. The DMK employed similar threatening tactics to get its way with the Congress in 2004. What Mr. Kurunanidhi fails to recognize is the stronger hand of the Congress this time around. In comparison to the DMK, Trinamool Congress firebrand Mamata Banerjee was tame. The slayer of the communist parties in West Bengal and the largest Congress ally, she appears to be satisfied with the Railways portfolio that she is expected to get. Her sights are firmly set on round two against the communists in the West Bengal assembly elections in 2010.

The Roster

¶5. (U) The Cabinet Ministers sworn in today are:

- Pranab Mukherjee (78): Lok Sabha member from West Bengal; Foreign Minister (2006-09)
- Sharad Pawar (68): Lok Sabha from Maharashtra; Agricultural Minister (2004-09)
- A.K. Antony (68): Rajya Sabha from Kerala; Defense Minister (2006-09)
- P. Chidambaram (63): Lok Sabha from Tamil Nadu; Home Minister (2008-09)
- Mamata Banerjee (54): Lok Sabha from West Bengal; President of the Trinamool Congress Party (1998-present)
- S.M. Krishna (78): Karnataka; Governor of Maharashtra (2004-08)
- Ghulam Nabi Azad (58): Rajya Sabha from Jammu and Kashmir; Member of the Congress Working Committee (1987-present)
- Sushil Kumar Shinde (67): Lok Sabha from Maharashtra; Cabinet Minister of Power (2006-09)
- Veerappa Moily (69): Lok Sabha from Karnataka; Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Oversight Committee (2006-09)
- Jaipal Reddy (67): Lok Sabha from Andhra Pradesh; Minister of Urban Development (2004-09)
- Kamal Nath (63): Lok Sabha from Madhya Pradesh, Minister for Commerce and Industry (2004-09)
- Vayalar Ravi (71): Rajya Sabha from Kerala; Minister of

Overseas Affairs (2006-09)

- Meira Kumar (63): Lok Sabha from Bihar
- Murli Deora (72): Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra; Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas (2006-08)
- Kapil Sibal (60): Lok Sabha from New Delhi; Minister of Science and Technology (2004-09)
- Ambika Soni (65): Rajya Sabha from Punjab; Minister of Tourism and Culture (2004-09)
- B.K. Handique (74): Lok Sabha from Assam; Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers (2004-09)
- Anand Sharma (56): Rajya Sabha from Himachal Pradesh; Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs (2004-09)
- C.P. Joshi (58): Lok Sabha from Rajasthan; Congress Committee President from Rajasthan

BURLEIGH